

## Testing Prudence

By M. J. PHILLIPS

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Berkeley Marshall leaned luxuriously back in the study chair, boistered his feet to the bed and blew a ring of smoke ceilingward from his cigar. "To recollect," he began, directing his remarks to the calendar which hung on the wall and from which started back at him the face of a supposedly beautiful young woman with a fixed and weary smile. "Young left ear is considerably out of the wind. I can't pardon, I'm not an artist. I'm a civil engineer—or will be next time—that isn't what I started out to remark."

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"The question seems to be shall I go on peddling maps and accumulating more filthy lucre, which I may possibly need; shall I go home, which is 300 miles away; to college, which is 450, or to Sylvan Cove, which is under a hundred and where pretty young women, it is presumed, abound?"

In due parliamentary form the Sylvan Cove question was put and carried unanimously, whereupon the boy—he was little more than a bowled gravely to the calendar lady and thanked her for her assistance in voting with him. Then he ran down the stairs of the country hotel to conduct the time table, for he was in a hurry to be off.

Marshall found Sylvan Cove in the elaborate simplicity of stage of summer resort development. Everything was costly, but very plain, for the Cove was inhabited each season mainly by wealthy people who had become accustomed to their money.

On the first day of his stay Marshall naively confided to his cousin that he believed Prudence Fairchild to be the prettiest girl at the Cove, whereupon Torrence grinned and replied, "Stung, are you?" On the second day he learned that she could swim like a seal and golf like a Scot. That evening, by virtue of four dances which she generously gave him at the pavilion party, his stock of knowledge was augmented by the fact that Miss Prudence danced like a fairy.

His approval of the tanned, red-lipped and wholesome young woman deepened during a long sail the next morning, when he discovered that her taste in books and tennis rackets was identical with his own. When Torrence informed him later, however, that her father, Rufus Fairchild, was credited with more millions than there were letters to his name the young man experienced a novel and entirely unpleasant sinking of the heart.

His own financial situation did not trouble Marshall—in fact, he found humor in his poverty. Marshall's father had been rich until an industrial flurry had left him broken and penniless. Berkeley himself, a natural engineer and in love with the profession he had chosen, felt the present stir of genius within him, vague but real. His teachers predicted great things of him, and with the knowledge of his own powers and his burning desire to achieve fame and wealth were merely around the next corner.

Yet the fact of Miss Fairchild's wealth depressed him. "I've almost monopolized her since I've been here," he told himself, "and she'll think it's the blooming money. I suppose half this bunch that's hanging around her would marry a Diggor Indian for the old man's pile. I wish she were poor!" The latter, aggrieved and sincere remark revealed to Marshall that he was dangerously near being in love.

A certain sensitive pride, for he had a morbid fear that his attitude might be misconstrued, kept Marshall out of the girl's presence most of the time thereafter. Maybe she understood, for the possession of much money often brings a woman bitter wisdom; maybe it was a feminine desire to repay him for his aloofness; at any rate, Miss Fairchild contrived to give Marshall a glance at parting, as he held her cool little hand, that thrilled his every pulse. It was like the song of a nightingale or the scent of June roses. And the memory moved him again and again that winter as he built theoretical bridges in the class room or delivered vegetable soup in the hotel dining room.

Now, a look such as that from a girl who is not a flirt dwells in her memory too. Miss Fairchild's cheeks were hot sometimes when she thought of it and of the answering glance of bewildered joy that flashed from Marshall's blue eyes. "He might take advantage of it," she said to herself in brief, delicious panic when the invitation of a chum, Nell Burrows, to come for the January hop of the seniors at Marshall's college reached her. But she went nevertheless.

The assurance with which she confessed five of the dances on her card at the ball showed that Marshall remembered. They sat out (1906), which was delightful, but dangerous. There was little said, and the silence between them was intimate and significant. Torrence was intimate with the glamour of the lights and the music, from the half shielded promise of her eyes and the interjection of her beauty, Marshall

was not satisfied. "If she were only poor!" he repeated to himself. "How can she know that it's she I want and not the money? Suppose that she thinks I'm a fortune hunter? And if the money makes any difference with her, then she doesn't care for me. I wish I knew. If you only could give me a sign, sweetheart, that you had faith in my love!"

It was lunchtime, and Marshall was at his accustomed table in the hotel. His musings were broken by the opening of the door. Miss Fairchild and Miss Burrows came in. They were accompanied by Ironson and Carrick. They sat at the table in the next class. Out of the corner of his eye Marshall saw Miss Fairchild stare a little when she recognized him. When the party had been seated two tables away by young Condon, another student waiter, he stole back to his table. He had given her no opportunity for a greeting.

For it had flashed over the young man that the sign, either of favor or of contempt for his poverty and his mental occupation, must be given. The girl would show whether her nature were gold or dross. If she were ashamed of him, if she left the room without a word, he resolved to tear the love he felt from his heart and trample it under foot.

Marshall never knew what he did before the crucial time came, the moment of the party's rising from the table after lunch, but no detail of what followed escaped him. He saw the arm sed lift of Ironson's eyebrows, the scowl on Carrick's forehead and Miss Burrows' undisturbed interest as Prudence Fairchild, eyes softly shining, came back to where he stood.

"If the mountain will not go to Mohammed," she said smilingly, "then of course Mohammed must come to the mountain. And I mean to quarrel with you some time for turning your back when I came in. But I shan't scold now; I'm leaving for home tomorrow, and I wondered if I'll see you again."

"I will call tonight to say good-by," he replied eagerly. "And I have something important to say, if I may see you alone. I think I've been waiting all my life to say it."

Her glance thrilled him as it had that September day at the seashore.

"You may see me alone," she whispered.

The Florentine Epicure.

Your typical Florentine is epicurean to the toe tips. His enthusiasms and yearnings are quite other than those of the northerner. Give him 2 francs a day for life, and he will toll no more. He may be a marquis and seventh or eighth in direct descent, but he will be content to forego the assertion of his rank so he may thenceforward enjoy the priceless boon of leisure and independence. His leisure he will dissipate at the cafe with perhaps two three-halfpenny sweet fluids per diem, and you may study the effect of his independence in his country manners even though his but be worn at the time and his coat back be deplorably shabby. He is a perfect brook, shallow as you please, yet engaging for his pellucidity. As he sits on the red velvet cushions and looks forth at the carriages and gowns of fashion in the Via Tornabuoni he shows no trace of envy in his open countenance. What, in effect, have these rich ones more than he save the ennobling of high feeding? The monuments and blue skies of Florence, not to mention the glorious or stirring memories of its history, are rather more his than theirs.—Cornhill Magazine.

Darrell's Retirement.

In 1876 Mr. Darrell was raised by the queen to the peerage under the title of Lord Beaconsfield, and he left the house of commons before the news of his elevation to the house of lords had been made public. His withdrawal from the stage where he had played so long the leading part in a manner obviously devised to avoid any sort of avowal, was in accordance with the dignity which characterized the remaining years of his life after the defeat of the Conservatives, when the general election of 1880, in consequence of the Midlothian campaign, had terminated his public career. No applicant for his opinions on any subject ever received a postal card from Lord Beaconsfield. No speech was ever made by him at railway stations. He died in 1881 as he had lived—alone, a stranger amid a strange people. After his death his memory became to English Conservatives an object of almost sentimental affection; to English Radicals it remained an object of never failing animosity. But to Englishmen of all politics, to Conservatives and Liberals alike, his life continues to be a constant puzzle, an unsolved enigma.—London Standard.

An African Sea Serpent Story.

Here is a sea serpent story from one of the great fresh water lakes of central Africa. The Globe Trotter of Nairobi, British East Africa, tells it: "According to natives on the shore and islands of Lake Victoria the real simon pure water python is a reality. Officers on board the Sibyl and the Winifred have time and again been unable to account for the unrest shown at times in the most tranquil waters. Sir Clement Hill in crossing the lake some years ago, in a launch, with one Macgregor, the engineer, saw this monster and described it as having a head resembling the hippopotamus, only three times broader, but much shorter, and wedge shaped. The opinion of the natives regarding its length, etc., differs very much, but all agree that the reptile is amphibious and declare they have seen forty feet or more lying dormant in the banks, while the supposed tall, sixty or seventy feet from shore, created a commotion in the water resembling the wash of an ocean steamer."

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